DIVERSITY: 2015 AND THE AFRO-AMERICAN ARMY OFFICER

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ABSTRACT

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This study addresses the strategic importance of recruiting and
maintaining a racially diverse officer corps—specifically the
challenging task of continuing to do so successfully in the
opening quarter of the twenty-first century. It investigates
Afro-American underrepresentation in the officer corps, noting
the considerably less attention this issue receives as compared
to that of Afro-American overrepresentation in the enlisted
corps. The proportion of Afro-American officers in the Army is
roughly the same proportion of all college graduates in the
relevant age group who are Afro-American. Further, the proportion
of Afro-Americans in the officer corps has been steadily
increasing. However, recent data indicate this trend may be
reversing due to the increasing competition for this relevant age
group from corporations and university professional programs.
Also, growing negative perceptions associated with military
service may be changing Afro-Americans' attitudes toward military
careers.

This study concludes that the Army's attempts to recruit and
retain highly qualified Afro-American officers by the year 2015
will be unsuccessful unless current recruitment, training, and
retention programs improve and continue to evolve into the
twenty-first century.

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THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF RACIAL DIVERSITY

> The Army has long recognized the value of people with
> different backgrounds and different heritage and has
> striven to integrate everyone to produce a top quality
> military organization. However, the Army, like other
> organizations in both the public and private sector,
> continues to work through the challenges of building
> and maintaining a diverse organization. By valuing
> uniqueness, respecting differences, maximizing
> individual potentials, and synergizing collective
> talents and experiences the Army will achieve success
> in the future. Senior leaders must recognize the
> importance of "Diversity" and ensure that the climate
> and culture of their organization reinforces Diversity
> as a value.
>
> U.S. Army War College, AY98 Curriculum Guidance

The value to American society of having a significant number

of Afro-Americans make it through college and into leadership

positions in corporations, professional service organizations,

industry, and academic institutions is not any different from the

value the Army sees in having Afro-American officers of all

grades serving within its ranks. Over three decades ago, during

the turbulent 1960s and 1970s, the percentage of Afro-Americans

in the enlisted ranks grew much faster than the percentage of

Afro-American officers. This imbalance led to low morale and

racial tension. To correct the problems associated with this

situation, Army leaders aggressively increased the ranks with

more Afro-American officers. Therefore, Army senior leaders

believe a racially diverse officer corps is essential for our

Army as we set out to accomplish the strategically important missions of the twenty-first century.

The twenty-first century will offer many diverse and challenging opportunities for the U.S. Army, but none will be more critical than maintaining a racially diverse force. Recent history reveals the unacceptable costs and risks of failure associated with a racially imbalanced Army.

No era in American history highlights the problem more than the Vietnam War era. As the war dragged on, increased racial polarization consumed our armed forces. Many black leaders denounced the war, but mainly white Americans led the antiwar movement. Race relations worsened over the course of the war; pervasive disciplinary problems created an overall climate of racial hostility. Racially motivated incidents occurred in Vietnam and on Army posts around the world.[1]

By the early 1970s, racial strife throughout the ranks was commonplace. There was real and perceived discrimination against blacks in the military, and the spillover from domestic racial and political turmoil added to the problem. The lack of black officers exacerbated the Army's problems. Although there were ample numbers of black senior noncommissioned officers, there were few officers. As late as 1968 fewer than one in a hundred plebes entering West Point was black. At the end of the Vietnam War, only three in a hundred Army officers were black.[2] Black officer leadership in the ranks was indeed absent. The Army

leadership of the 1970s recognized that its racial problem was so critical that it was on the verge of self-destruction. That realization set in motion the policies and initiatives that have led to today's relatively positive state of affairs.[3] The question now is, "Will the Army be able to maintain this momentum throughout the twenty-first century?"

This study examines the challenges confronting the U.S. Army's attempts to recruit and retain qualified Afro-American officers in 2015 and beyond. It focuses primarily on the factors influencing qualified Afro-Americans' decisions to accept an Army commission, to choose other military services, or to accept competing opportunities in the civilian employment sector. In addition, the study reports on attitudes and experiences of blacks with respect to whether or not to pursue a military career.

The study uses "black" and "Afro-American" interchangeably. In accord with Moskos and Butler, (All That We Can Be: Black Leadership and Racial Integration The Army Way), I agree that Afro-American is an appropriate designation (if one is necessary other than "black") for black Americans. I agree that it has a much older and more distinguished lineage within the black community than the more recent African-American. I also agree that Afro-American, in contrast to African-American, emphasizes our unique American experience that has been a defining feature of America's core culture in a way that Africa has never been.

This study addresses the strategic importance of recruiting and maintaining a racially diverse officer corps. It anticipates the challenging task of continuing to do so successfully in the opening quarter of the twenty-first century. Principally, this study investigates Afro-American underrepresentation in the officer corps, noting the considerably less attention the issue receives compared to that of Afro-American overrepresentation in the enlisted corps. Equally important, this study will discuss and analyze the underlying reasons why recent data indicates Afro-Americans are becoming more reluctant to pursue military careers.

The Afro-American population of the United States is one of the fastest growing population groups in the nation. The Census Bureau estimates that, by the year 2020, Afro-Americans will make up thirteen percent of the national population. Similarly, the pool of black college graduates will also increase. For years, Army officials and personnel managers have recognized that socioeconomic changes and demographic trends will ultimately lead to increased participation of blacks in the enlisted ranks. However, attempts to increase the numbers of black officers, especially to the field grade ranks, have met with only marginal success. If the Army's objective is to ensure that Afro-American officer percentages keep pace with the anticipated population growth, research in this area must continue. This study should provide insight and additional information to assist Army leaders

in their quest to maintain a diverse officer corps through focused recruitment and retention.

This study attempts to stimulate future research on what the Army will need to do in the twenty-first century to recruit and retain Afro-American officers.

HISTORY AS IT IS, NOT AS WE WERE TAUGHT

A review of Afro-Americans' involvement in the Army's history is enlightening. It is difficult to appreciate the progress that has been made thus far, or to fully address the work yet to be done, without knowing where we started.

Afro-Americans have a long history of involvement in our nation's survival. The historic linkage of Afro-American participation in the defense of the United States extends from the Revolutionary War to Operation Desert Storm.

Although Afro-Americans have fought in every war, they have not always served as commissioned officers. The history of the black Army officer begins with the Civil War. White officers commanded most of the all-black units, for there were only seventy-five black officers, including eight physicians. The highest ranking black officer to serve with the Union was Lieutenant Colonel Alexander T. Agusta, a surgeon. Incidentally, of the 75 to 100 black men that reached officer rank, most were chaplains or surgeons.

In the annals of United States military history, the Spanish-American War was of special significance for the black officer. It was the first time black men served in every Army grade below general officer. This opportunity arose due to a geographically determined national security strategy. Separated from both Europe and Asia by oceans, the United States understood that those waters also provided a time cushion for mobilization.

Any threat would have to go through the Navy first. Thus, the Navy became "the first line of defense."[4]

The small Regular Army was only a cadre force. Time would permit recruitment, training, and deployment of volunteers and draftees who would fight, led by experienced Regulars. An additional mobilization asset came from the various state militias, which were composed of part-time citizen soldiers. Many of these were all black units with black officer leadership. Thus, when the state militia and national guard units were federalized, hundreds of Afro-American officers instantly became active duty officers. Hence, the Spanish-American War provided a small increase in the number of black Regular Army officers.

The nation's entry into World War I again raised the question of how to utilize black soldiers. The most difficult question for the War Department was the demand that blacks be trained and used as commissioned officers. Initially many decision-makers dismissed the idea, even though Afro-American officers had distinguished themselves during the Spanish-American War. Finally, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, and black newspapers were able to persuade the War Department to change its policy. An all-black Officer Training School was established at Fort Dodge, near Des Moines, Iowa. However, the War Department had an iron-clad rule: No black officer could command white officers or enlisted men.[5]

Bigotry and unsupported allegations characterized the Interwar Years (1919-1940). As the armed forces aggressively decreased their overall personnel strength, a focal point of the Army's anti-black sentiment became the black commissioned officer. Despite countless well-documented cases of their superb combat leadership, the Army eliminated most black officers from active duty following World War I. In essence, downsizing amounted to a convenient method of ostracizing and eliminating black officers.

An effective argument against retaining black officers was their alleged poor performance. The black Officer Training School (OTS) at Des Moines, Iowa, also received criticism. Many senior officers of the time, such as Major General Charles C. Ballou, commander of the World War I 93rd Infantry Division, claimed that the officers' high school educations did not properly prepare them to be acceptable leaders. According to one of his letters, "For the parts of a machine requiring the finest steel, pot metal was provided."[6] His attitude was pervasive throughout the Army. During the Interwar Years, black officers' promotions were rare. None had attended West Point. In 1940, at the beginning of the peacetime draft, there were only 5,000 blacks in the regular Army, with less than a dozen black officers.

The U.S. Army took its first steps toward racial integration early in World War II. The obvious waste of duplicating white

and black facilities caused the Army to racially integrate all of its twenty-four Officer Candidate Schools, where the primary quality sought was proven leadership capacity. The so-called "ninety-day wonders" who survived the standard three-month course received commissions as second lieutenants. Each received an assignment in one of the 24 Army branches, ranging from the Army Air Forces Administrative School (Miami, Florida) to the Tank Destroyer School (Camp Hood, Texas). However, black officers could serve only in all-black units.

On 26 July 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 9981 which stated, "there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Services without regard to race, color, religion, or national orgin." However, the order did not explicity require desegregation. But it did establish the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services, and facilitate discussions concerning alternatives to segregation.[7] For this reason, the Army began the Korean War as a segregated force. Only after high battle losses and slow troop replacements did the Army abandon segregation.

In the years preceding the Vietnam War, black officers increasingly entered the Army and began serving full careers. Today, Afro-Americans make up 11.6% of the Army officer corps, in contrast to the Navy's 5.9%, the Marine Corps' 6.5%, and the Air Force's 5.8% (Table 1).[8] Compared with the other military

services, the Army stands out as the absolute leader. Within the Army officer corps, one in nine is an Afro-American. If officers are the executives of the Army, then the Army boasts proportionally more black executives than any other institution in the country.

OFFICERS	Black		Hispanic		Other		Total	
	NO.	PCT.	NO.	PCT.	NO.	PCT.	NO.	PCT.
ARMY	9,093	11.6	2,732	3.5	3,725	4.7	15,550	19.8
NAVY	3,386	5.9	2,037	3.6	2,286	4.0	7,709	13.5
MARINE CORPS	1,163	6.5	744	4.1	474	2.6	2,381	13.2
AIR FORCE	4,374	5.8	1,605	2.1	3,268	4.3	9,247	12.3
TOTAL DOD	18,016	7.9	7,118	3.1	9,753	4.3	34,887	15.2

Table 1: Minorities In Uniform (As of May 31, 1997)

THE CHALLENGES

Clearly, the current global economy has just begun to blossom with the emergence of post-Cold War global trading. Alliances, trade agreements, and the international marketplace are facts of contemporary life. Origins are no longer critical; what we find is a mix of peoples, ideas, and values. All of this diversity creates exciting possibilities. But it also requires that leaders must rethink the environment in which they operate.

Much like the business sector, The Department of Defense personnel projections for the next decade depicts concentrated efforts to increase Afro-American and other minority representation in all military Services. The competition for qualified Afro-American candidates among the armed forces, as well as in the private sector (business and professional), will produce a wide open field. For this reason, it will become increasingly more difficult for the Army to recruit and retain qualified Afro-Americans for primarily three reasons.

First, there is intense civilian competition for Afro-American college graduates to fill corporate ranks and to further bolster profits in multicultural communities. Secondly, intense recruiting efforts by colleges and universities to enroll Afro-Americans in more attractive professional and internship programs such as law, medicine, and professional services will continue to draw from an already small pool of candidates. Therefore, many blacks who might otherwise enter precommissioning programs or the

United States Military Academy may choose non-military alternatives. Thirdly, many young Afro-American graduates are losing interest in joining the Army. This attitude is pervasive among a group often referred to as the "crossover generation." This group tends to be more suspicious of whites and see more discrimination within the Army than other members of the Afro-American community.[9] These factors will have a severe impact on the Army's ability to maintain a diverse officer corps unless we are proactive in acknowledging and addressing them.

CORPORATE OPPORTUNITIES

Corporations throughout America are addressing some serious issues related directly to changing demographics. Many corporate diversity initiatives place significant emphasis on human resources initiatives such as retention, development, and upward mobility of women and minorities.[10] Most companies are doing well at recruiting a diverse work force. Companies are striving for long-term cultural change to ensure that the work environment is not excluding particular groups or individuals from maximizing their potential.

The business rationale for supporting minority career development and upward mobility advocates full utilization of all employees by ensuring that the decision-making ranks include individuals who represent the internal and external work force, markets, and the world. Jose Berrios, Vice-president, Diversity

and Headquarters Personnel, at Gannet & Co., Inc. explains that: "By making diversity a business strategy and making it a business objective of senior management, you show the value of having diverse views, diverse people, and a creativity that is generated that ultimately allows you to attain your business objectives."[11]

Mr. Berrios' assessment is consistent with the views of other corporate leaders, black and white. Collectively, executives agree that the reality of current and future business strategies require more Afro-Americans in the boardrooms of white-owned companies as a matter of good business sense, not because the world has run out of smart white people. Afro-Americans bring a unique business perspective and a fresh dimension to the business culture, so they are becoming more and more welcome. The corporate world views blacks as a strength to be leveraged, not a burdensome deficit. The result of this kind of strategic thinking by corporate America has enabled blacks to diversify into nontraditional positions and move away from their concentration in retail and personal service careers. Proactive efforts in the private sector, where diversity, mentoring and strategic alliances with minority firms have increasingly become a goal, have enabled blacks to steadily climb to senior-level management positions.

Texas Instruments Inc. (TI) of Dallas, Texas, is one of the many companies that focuses on underutilized Afro-American talent. The company has over 56,000 employees worldwide. Until

recently, Afro-Americans accounted for 15% of the nonexempt workforce and 4% of the exempt or managerial/professional population (TI representatives note that over two-thirds of their exempt positions require technical degrees, and that Afro-Americans earned less than 4% of the engineering degrees awarded in the U.S. during 1994-1995). Over the past five years, the number of Afro-Americans companywide has increased by 40%, while the number in senior management positions has increased by 70%.[12] Also, TI's diversity efforts have become an integral piece of the strategic vision of the organization, which includes a recruiting plan, diversity training, and mentoring programs.

Afro-Americans are also making great strides in starting up and competing as black business owners. According to the U.S. Census, the number of black owned businesses rose 46% between 1987 and 1992 (424,200 to 620,000), compared with a 26% increase in U.S. business overall. "Progress is being made," says Richard Parsons, president of Time Warner (parent of FORTUNE's publisher) and one of the nation's most powerful black executives. "People of color are achieving corporate positions that their parents could have never dreamed of reaching, and in unprecedented numbers."[13] There are few case studies on black professional and managerial careers. However, many diversity experts are seeing increased minority participation at the upper echelons of the corporate structure.[14]

The descendants of the "politically focused" Afro-Americans of the 1960's are growing up to be the "economic power-minded" young black adults of the twenty-first century. This current generation of Afro-Americans wants power in the business world, not just wealth. These well-educated, highly motivated, and strong-willed heirs are raising the proverbial glass ceiling beyond any level their parents dared imagine. Afro-American business leaders are influencing hiring and promotions at their companies; they are spearheading recruiting programs at universities across the country. In short, they are obliterating the myth that Afro-Americans cannot prosper at the highest levels within the private business sector.

PROFESSIONAL "CALLINGS" AND OPPORTUNITIES

In the past, Jim Crow segregation laws kept the social classes in the Afro-American community bound together. Blacks on welfare and black Ph.D's. alike sat at the back of the bus and were denied work because of their race. This common experience of racial oppression gave blacks a sense of solidarity and interdependence. Black physicians depended on black patients; black lawyers and accountants served black clients.

Following desegregation, many affluent Afro-Americans moved from the ghetto into integrated suburbs. Graduates of Howard and Wilberforce now send their children to Harvard and Stanford. Likewise, their clientele and choices are more diverse.

Today, and in the future, black professionals will continue to be in great demand. Law firms, hospitals, and universities are recruiting Afro-Americans at an incredible rate in order to keep pace with the changing demographics. The United States is undergoing a transition from a predominantly white population to a more diverse racial and ethnic society—including whites, blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Native Americans. By 2010, Hispanics will surpass blacks and become the nation's largest minority group (Table 2).[15]

TOTAL POPULATION (MILLIONS)					
YEAR	NUMBER	PERCENT	YEAR	NUMBER	PERCENT
1980	226.6	100	2010	297.7	100
1990	248.6	100	2015	310.1	100
2000	274.6	100	2020	322.7	100

YEAR		WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN
1980	NUMBER	181.0	26.1	14.6	3.6	1.3
	PERCENT	82.9	11.2	4.7	0.9	0.3
1990	NUMBER	188.3	29.3	22.4	7.0	1.8
	PERCENT	79.6	11.7	6.4	1.8	0.5
2000	NUMBER	197.0	33.6	31.4	10.6	2.0
	PERCENT	71.8	12.2	11.4	3.9	0.7
2010	NUMBER	202.4	37.5	**41.1**	14.2	2.3
	PERCENT	68.0	12.6	**13.8**	4.8	0.8
2015	NUMBER	205.0	39.5	46.7	16.4	2.5
	PERCENT	64.3	12.9	16.3	5.7	0.8

Table 2: Population by Race (Projected)

Racial composition of the US population.[16]

A recent report prepared by the Research Institute of the College Fund/United Negro College Fund (UNCF) identifies current and future educational opportunities for Afro-Americans. The

findings indicate that while the percentage of black college

students rose from 8.8 percent to 10.1 percent between 1984 and

1994, this is still below their 14.3 percent representation in

the general college-age population. This underrepresentation is

largest in the nation's most prestigious research universities

and on the Ph.D. level. "A higher percentage of African

Americans are attending college than ever before," says William

Gray, III, president of the College Fund/UNCF. "These new

graduates form the backbone of the African American middle class,

well-prepared to compete in today's increasingly competitive

marketplace. This spells out the achievements made and

challenges facing African-American students and provides a guide

for what needs to be changed in the future."

Citing both achievement and challenge, the study reveals that

many of the gains for blacks are due to huge increases in

participation by black women, including a monumental 219 percent

increase of black women obtaining first-in-the-family

professional degrees.

The report shows that blacks cluster into a narrow range of

fields. At the bachelor's degree level, black men and women

concentrate their efforts in business and management. At the

master's degree level, a high proportion of black men are

enrolled in education, while black women tend to receive degrees

in public administration and services. The percentages of blacks

who received doctorates in education and theology were nearly

double those of whites, while law and medicine attracted a higher proportion of blacks than any other professional fields. Black representation at all degree levels in technical fields--- including engineering, physics, and the life sciences-is low.[17] To offset this trend, companies such as General Electric (GE) are developing programs to help prospective minority employees. GE provides scholarships and internships to minority students to help enhance educational and professional growth opportunities.[18]

Today, as it will be in the future, young Afro-Americans are entering college with clear plans for life and with more options than ever before. The competition for bright and ambitious blacks is keen not only in the business sector, but also in the professional fields. Some envision professional careers in business, medicine, or law. Others dream of careers in education, research, or service related fields, such as social work, psychology, and speech pathology. Employers hiring new college graduates this year expect an increase of approximately 6.2 percent in growth of jobs. Job prospects have been expanding for four consecutive years.[19] Mike Shinn, Corporate Recruiting Program Manager for General Electric, reports that his organization hires between 1,000 and 1,200 people a year for assignments around the globe. Graduates from technical disciplines are going to be extremely employable in the coming years. Shinn also says that "The skills in highest demand are leadership skills. These include demonstrated ability to work

with and lead teams, change orientation, and interpersonal skills. Being able to use computers is very important, but we specifically look for the leadership skills."[20] This phenomenon is expected to continue, which means greater opportunities for Afro-American college graduates, who are already in great demand.

CHANGING ATTITUDES

During the past few years, it has been difficult to recruit and retain black junior officers not only because of increasing opportunities in civilian sector, but also because of blacks' changing attitudes toward military service. Although the Army fosters racial harmony and total integration (President Truman ordered integration of all military services in 1950, years ahead of the rest of society), some Afro-Americans view the military as a racist institution that tolerates minorities and women because it is compelled to do so.[21]

In fact, Afro-Americans' attitudes toward the military are diverse and often contradictory. In simplified terms, the black general public tends to have favorable views of the military, while black leadership and intelligentsia tend to be more critical.[22] These conflicting views create problems for the armed forces' recruitment and retention efforts. Afro-Americans possessing the educational requirements and leadership skills necessary to be competitive Army officers are greatly influenced by leaders of the community and academe. Therefore, the relevant

age group sought by the Army are the same ones directed to other professions by black "power brokers."

Black civil rights leaders, academic advisors, and cultural figures typically articulate negative views of military service. They contend that defense spending takes away federal funds that are needed for domestic social programs. However, while this view is popular among the well-educated, there is another perception more prevalent throughout the entire Afro-American community. Many believe that the military takes away the "best and brightest" (college educated black males) from the community, where the need is desperate, to do the dirty work of a country that actually practices racial discrimination over equity.[23] These views and perceptions, regardless of their validity, have a profound impact on young educated Afro-Americans' career decisions.

On the other hand, the Afro-American general public regards the Army as a secure place of employment and an honorable career in its own right. More importantly, they regard the Army as an institution truly committed to equal opportunity, where soldiers of all races receive fair treatment. According to national surveys, black Americans are four times as likely as whites to state that opportunities for advancement are greater in the armed forces than in civilian life.[24]

It would be exceedingly unwise for Army leaders to ignore the long-standing strain in relations between the American military

and the black civilian leadership. As we enter the 21st century, employment opportunities for educated blacks are steadily increasing in the private sector. The Army is no longer the only organization committed to equal opportunity, secure employment, and Afro-American leadership at the most senior levels.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

As the United States Army's history highlights, efforts to integrate the officer ranks have been successful, but very tenuous. To date, Affirmative Action initiatives have been the chief, and often perceived by many, exclusive strategy for including and assimilating blacks into the Army. However, sometimes the Army has been spurred by sheer military necessity, sometimes by moral and civic beliefs, and sometimes by legal requirements-or all three. Much of what the Army does can be seen as a response to the basic series of assumptions on which Affirmative action programs are based:

1. The mainstream in U.S. business (the Army also) is made up of white males.

2. Women and minorities are excluded from this mainstream because of widespread racial, ethnic, and sexual prejudices.

3. Such exclusion is unnecessary, given the strength of the U.S. economy.

4. Furthermore, such exclusion is contrary to both good public policy and common decency.

5. Therefore, legal and social coercion is necessary to bring about change.[25]

Unfortunately, there is a frustrating and virtually unavoidable downside to Affirmative Action—especially as it is often implemented. Known as the "affirmative action cycle," this traditional approach to diversity inevitably creates a cycle of

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crisis, problem recognition, action, great expectations,

disappointment, dormancy, and renewed crisis.[26]

The cycle begins with recognition of a problem, a crisis:

excessive turnover, inadequate upward mobility, or

disproportionately low morale. Whatever the problem, the initial

affirmative action remedy is recruitment, which results in a

frantic search to find "qualified" blacks. In the Army,

"qualified" translates to those individuals who are most likely

to mesh with the current "officer's culture."

Following these recruitment periods, everyone experiences a

period of high expectations. Unfortunately, however, we find

that the original problem still has not been solved. The young

black officers do not progress as expected. White officers

complain about preferential treatment and reverse discrimination.

Blacks become uncomfortably aware of the stigma of affirmative

action activities. Everybody is unhappy with this situation.

Black officers feel "caught in the middle" and frustrated. In

addition, Congress and the public do not give the Army credit for

their good faith effort. Discouraged, some quit trying. At this

point, the relaxation stage begins. Affirmative action is placed

on the "back-burner" or blamed by all for a myriad problems.

This stage continues until the next crisis prompts action. Then

the cycle is repeated.

The goal of Affirmative Action was to fulfill a legal,

moral, and social responsibilities by initiating special efforts

to ensure the creation of a diverse workforce and encourage upward mobility for minorities and women.[27]

Consistent with Affirmative Action programs, the Army continues to implement initiatives designed to encourage awareness of and respect for diversity. These initiatives focus on the ways that men and women or people of different races reflect differences in values, attitudes, behavior styles, ways of thinking, and cultural background. With Affirmative Action, the assumption has been that dysfunctional behavior and attitudes can be attributed to malicious and deliberate decisions. Further initiatives assume that the undesirable behavior derives from a lack of awareness and understanding.

While the Army's intentions are commendable, they are insufficient for future challenges. We must manage diversity. Managing diversity requires more than simply supplementing an old system with new initiatives. It requires changing the system and modifying the core culture.[28] The following recommendations may help as a first step.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As we move into the 21st century, the recruitment and retention of Afro-American officers will assume paramount importance. Army leaders should address this challenge in three major ways.

The first and most immediate concern is to maintain our current group of junior officers. Senior leaders, regardless of their race, must seek out officers with great potential for coaching and mentoring. These supportive relationships increase young officers' professional value and enhance career opportunities. Scholars and psychologists who study organizations assert that mentoring is essential for personal and organizational growth and development.[29]

Additionally, a 1997 survey conducted by a United States Army War College (USAWC) student to which 26 black USAWC students responded and for which three general officers were interviewed documented the previous position.[30] However, unlike others, I do not think that the Army should adopt a formal mentoring program. I think mentoring relationships should evolve "naturally" as a result of work relationships or voluntary interest. To force mentoring along race, gender, or any other official line is inherently wrong-headed; such official efforts distract from the whole intent of mentoring. To assume that only blacks can mentor blacks or only women can mentor women is naive and prejudicial. Senior officers should seek mentoring relationships as a matter of duty.

This is the only viable course of action if we are to ensure today's black officers survive to provide a quality example for others to follow. Otherwise, progression of black officers to senior rank will continue to be slow and sparse. Without

continued progress of blacks to the highest ranks, we will not be able to attract enough young prospects in the numbers sufficient to reflect the makeup of the general black population.

Secondly, the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) must convince senior leaders (generals) that culture is important in creating an environment where affirmative actions become a way of life, not merely a block to be checked on the Officer Efficiency Report (OER). CSA should conduct a culture audit and use the results as a basis for developing a plan for systematically modifying Army culture. The objective should be to develop a set of cultural assumptions that are congruent with Army goals for Black officer representation at every rank. The use of a culture audit and the inclusion of white males strongly signal that this is an effort to manage diversity, rather than just another "give-away" program.

Finally, we must diligently work to increase the black community's awareness of and involvement in defense issues as well as social ones. Intense competition with other professions for talented young blacks will continue. The Army has to demonstrate to Afro-American leaders that they are equal partners in the defense of our nation. Just as Corporate America, the Army must enter black communities through a recruiting strategy that highlights defense concerns and lauds Afro-American achievements and advertize leadership opportunities. This

strategy must have an educational focus, directed at community and academic leaders, as well as college age blacks.

Honorable service and economic security are core values within Afro-American family structures. Therefore, young black adults will seek opportunities to meet these objectives. There is no reason why the Army should lose out to the private sector or another Service in the competition for the best and brightest in the black community. We must repackage our message-and then communicate it effectively.

Word Count: 5,991

ENDNOTES

[1] Charles C. Moskos and John Sibley Butler, <u>All that we can be: Black leadership and racial integration the Army way</u> (New York: BasicBooks, 1996), 32-33.

[2] Ibid., 33.

[3] Ibid., 47.

[4] Kenneth Estell, <u>The African-American Almanac</u>, (Washington, D.C.: Gale Research Inc., 1994), 1309.

[5] Ibid., 1312.

[6] Ibid., 1313.

[7] Bernard C. Nalty, <u>Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military</u> (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 242.

[8] Department of Defense, <u>DEFENSE ALMANAC 97</u> (Alexandria, VA: American Forces Information Service, 1997), 20.

[9] Herbert H. Denton and Barry Sussman, "'Crossover Generation' of Blacks Express Most Distrust of Whites." <u>Washington Post</u>, 25 March 1981, sec. A, p.1-3.

[10] Bill Nichols and Lorrie Grant, "Clinton: Close 'opportunity gap'." <u>USA TODAY</u>, 16 January 1998, Money Section, p.2.

[11] Special Advertising Section, "Diversity: Making the Business Case." <u>Business Week</u>, 9 December 1996, 50.

[12] Shari Caudron and Cassandra Hayes, " Are Diversity Programs Benefiting African Americans?" <u>Black Enterprise</u>, February 1997, 130.

[13] Roy S. Johnson, "The New Black Power." <u>Fortune</u>, 4 August 1997, 47.

[14] Eric L. Smith, "Someone's Knocking at the Door." <u>Black Enterprise</u>, May 1997, 98.

[15] Taynia Mann, "Profile of African-Americans 1970-1995." <u>The Black Collegian</u>, April 1996, 65.

[16] U.S. Bureau of the Census, <u>Statistical Abstract of the United States 1997</u> (117th edition.) October 1997, 18-19.

[17] "Blacks in College." <u>The Education Digest</u>, April 1997, 74.

[18] <u>Business Week</u>, 9 December 1996, 56.

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[22] Milton D. Morris, "African Americans and the New World Order," <u>Washington Quarterly</u> vol. 15, no. 2 (Autumn 1992): 5-21.

[23] Moskos and Butler, <u>All That We Can Be</u>, 110.

[24] Ibid., 111.

[25] R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr., <u>Beyond Race and Gender</u> (New York: AMACOM, 1991), 18.

[26] Ibid., 21.

[27] Ibid., 17.

[28] Ibid., 26.

[29] William E. Rosenbach, <u>Contemporary Issues in Leadership</u> (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 141.

[30] Craig Thomas Johnson, <u>United States Army Officer Professional Development: Black Officers' Perspectives</u> (USAWC Strategy Research Project, 1997), 21.

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